

Claims:

1 1. A method of issuing electronic coupons, comprising
2 the steps of:

3 making a master coupon available at an accessible
4 electronic site;

5 copying said master coupon into a reserved site for a
6 customer;

7 establishing a benefit associated with said coupon
8 wherein said benefit is variable.

1 2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the
2 benefit is variable in terms of time periods.

1 3. The method according to claim 1, wherein the
2 benefit is variable according to occurrences outside the
3 control of the customer.

1 4. The method according to claim 1, wherein the
2 benefit is variable according to specific acts of the
3 customer.

1 5. The method according to claim 4, wherein said acts
2 include the location of the customer.

1 6. The method according to claim 4, wherein the said
2 acts include sharing a coupon with another customer.

1 7. The method according to claim 4, wherein said acts
2 include purchase of a specific item.

1 8. The method according to claim 1, wherein the
2 customer coupon can be copied into another customer site
3 electronically while retaining the original customer coupon.

1 9. A data processing system for issuing electronic
2 coupons, comprising:

3 a server for generating master coupons at locations
4 attributable to different merchants and for establishing
5 locations attributable to various customers for receiving
6 coupons of each customer;

7 a network connection allowing customers to access said
8 master coupons at said merchant locations and for copying
9 master coupons into their own locations;

10 said coupons having a benefit which varies in
11 accordance with a parameter.

1 10. The system according to claim 9, wherein the
2 coupons may be shared from one customer to another.

1 11. The system according to claim 9, wherein the
2 network connection is an internet connection.

1 12. The system according to claim 9, wherein the
2 network connection is a wireless network connection.

1 13. An electronic coupon, stored electronically,
2 comprising:

3 a first indicator describing the businesses at which
4 the electronic coupon can be redeemed;

5 a second indicator describing a time period during
6 which the coupon is valid;

7 a third indicator describing any additional parameters
8 which effect the validity of the coupon; and

9 a fourth indicator describing the benefit of the coupon
10 to the redeemer;

11 wherein the benefit is a variable which depends on
12 events which occur after the issuance of said electronic
13 coupon.

14 14. The electronic coupon according to claim 13,
15 wherein the benefit is variable according to events outside
16 the control of the customer.

17 15. The method according to claim 13, wherein the
18 benefit is variable according to specific acts of the
19 customer.

20 16. The method according to claim 15, wherein said
21 acts include sharing a coupon with another customer.

22 17. The method of issuing and redeeming electronic
23 coupons, comprising the steps of:

3 making a master coupon available at an accessible
4 electronic site;
5 copying said master coupon into a site in a wireless
6 terminal;
7 presenting said wireless terminal at an appropriate
8 business for redeeming said electronic coupon; and
9 interconnecting said wireless terminal with a point of
10 sale device at said business for redeeming said coupon.

1 18. The method according to claim 17, wherein the
2 wireless terminal and point of sale device are
3 interconnected by a short range radio link.

4 19. The method according to claim 17, wherein the
5 wireless terminal and point of sale device are
6 interconnected by an infrared link.

1 20. The method according to claim 17, wherein the
2 wireless terminal and point of sale device are
3 interconnected by displaying bar codes on said wireless
4 device and scanning by said point of sale device.